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DEPARTMENT FOR S/WE - SASHA MEHRA AND GERDA LANE

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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: FIVE INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

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¶1. This is Embassy Skopje's response to reftel regarding the five most influential women in Macedonia. PolOff Mariana Neisuler is Post's officer responsible for tracking women's issues.

Tel: 389 2 3116 180 ext. 2111  
Fax: 389 2 3133 601  
Mobile: 389 70 306 024  
Email: NeisulerML@state.gov

¶2. Post has identified the following five Macedonian women of different ethnic backgrounds as the most influential in the country.

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Gabriela Konevska Trajkovska (age 35)

Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration  
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Contact Information: Macedonian Government, Ilinden bb, 1000 Skopje, Tel: 389 2 3113 245

As Deputy PM for European Integration, Konevska is responsible for coordinating the Macedonian government's efforts to join the EU. She is also the government's primary foreign assistance coordinator. A former journalist and lawyer, Konevska served from 2000-2004 as the director of the Regional Center for Fighting against Organized Crime, located in Bucharest, and as the chief of the international mission in Romania under the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). She also served as the personal political advisor to the SECI coordinator, and as president of the NGO Transparency Macedonia. She is fluent in English, French and Romanian, and has a basic knowledge of German and Greek.

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Radmila Sekerinska (age 34)

President of Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM)  
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Contact Information: Bihacka 8, 1000 Skopje, Tel: 389 2 3293 101

An engineer by training, Sekerinska previously served as Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration and Coordination of Foreign Assistance in the SDSM-led government from 2002-2006. She has been prominent in politics since 1998, when she was elected an SDSM Member of Parliament and served as the SDSM Spokesperson. Sekerinska was elected in

November 2006 as the leader of SDSM, the largest ethnic Macedonian opposition party, and remains an MP. She speaks fluent English and some French.

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Teuta Arifi (age 37)

Vice President of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)

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Contact Information: DUI MPs, Macedonian National Assembly,  
11 Oktomvri bb, 1000 Skopje, Tel: 389 70 383 907

As an MP and Vice President of the largest ethnic Albanian party in Macedonia, Arifi wields more political power than any other ethnic Albanian woman in the country. An academic with a BA in Albanian Literature and a PhD in Philosophy, Arifi entered the political scene in 2001 as a member of DUI's "intellectuals wing." She is a prominent academic and currently serves as the Dean of the Pedagogical Faculty of the Southeast European University in Tetovo. Arifi is fluent in English and French.

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Olivera Trajkovska (age 39)

Leading TV personality

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Contact Information: IDEA Plus Ashley & Holmes, III  
Makedonska Brigada bb, 1000 Skopje, Tel: 389 70 254 840

A psychologist by training, this influential Macedonian female journalist has worked for various local TV stations for the last 17 years. Her "Svetla Tochka" (Bright Point)

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program has unrivaled viewer ratings. An appearance on her show is considered a "rite of passage" for those seeking social or political prominence in Macedonian society. Trajkovska is considered an insightful journalist, with a sharp and occasionally provocative interviewing style that keeps her program at the top of the popular TV ratings.

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Esma Redzepova (age 63)

Leading Roma Singer and Humanitarian

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Contact Information: Samoilova bb, 1000 Skopje, Tel: 389 2 3116 113

The so-called "Queen of the Gypsies," Redzepova has performed since the age of 12 and has promoted Roma culture in Macedonia through hundreds of popular folk songs and six feature films. Born to a Turkish Muslim mother and a Serb father from Albania, Redzepova was discovered by the famous Roma musician Stevo Teodosievski. Together with Teodosievski, she has adopted 47 orphans and street children. She has performed in more than 8,000 concerts in 30 countries, and twice has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

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